DARK HORSE COMICS
INDIANA JONES 1 OF 2
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INDIANA JONES™
AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE
MCGREAL — RAWSON
HOOPER — WOCH

INDIANA JONES™

AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE

CHAPTER ONE

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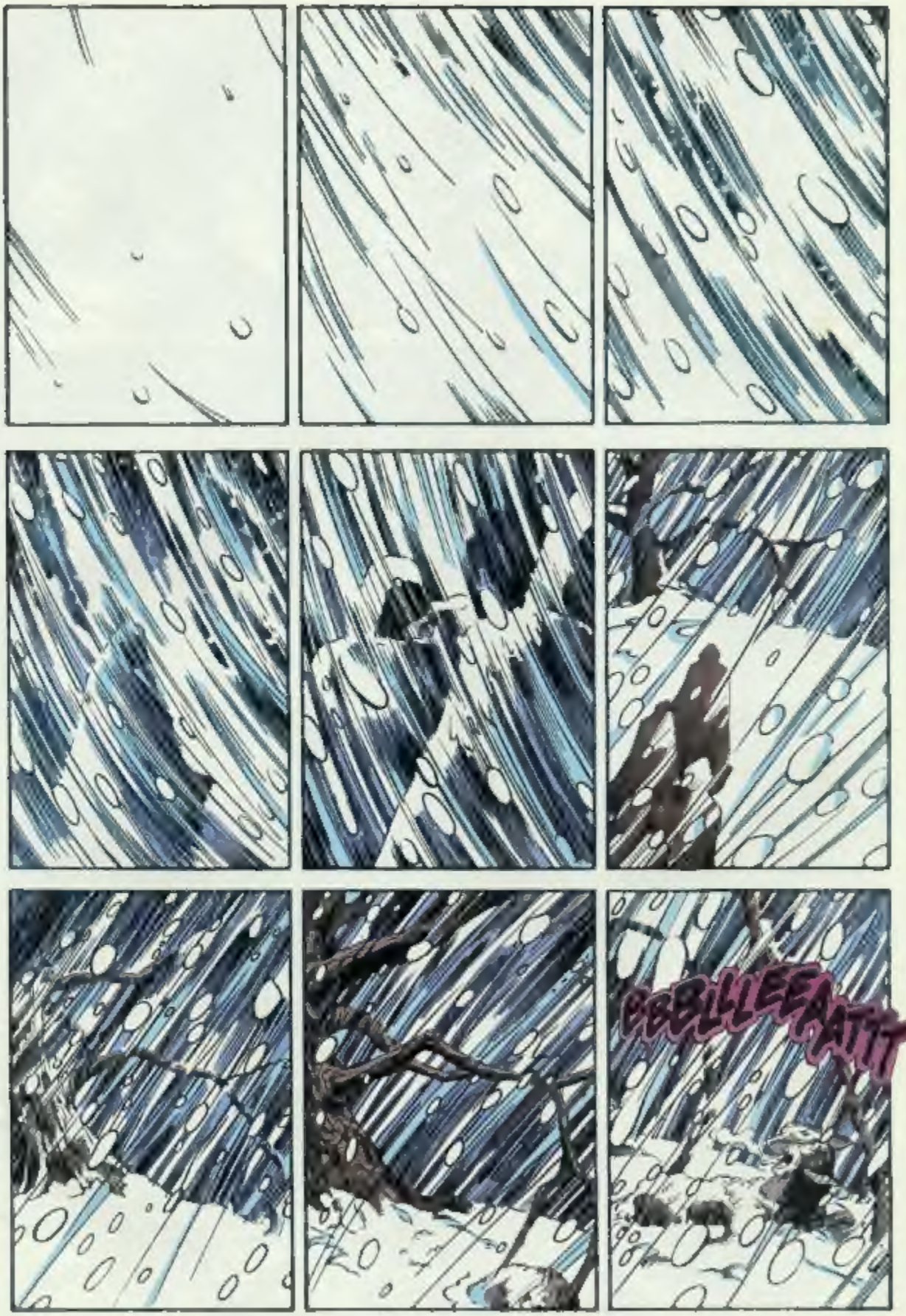
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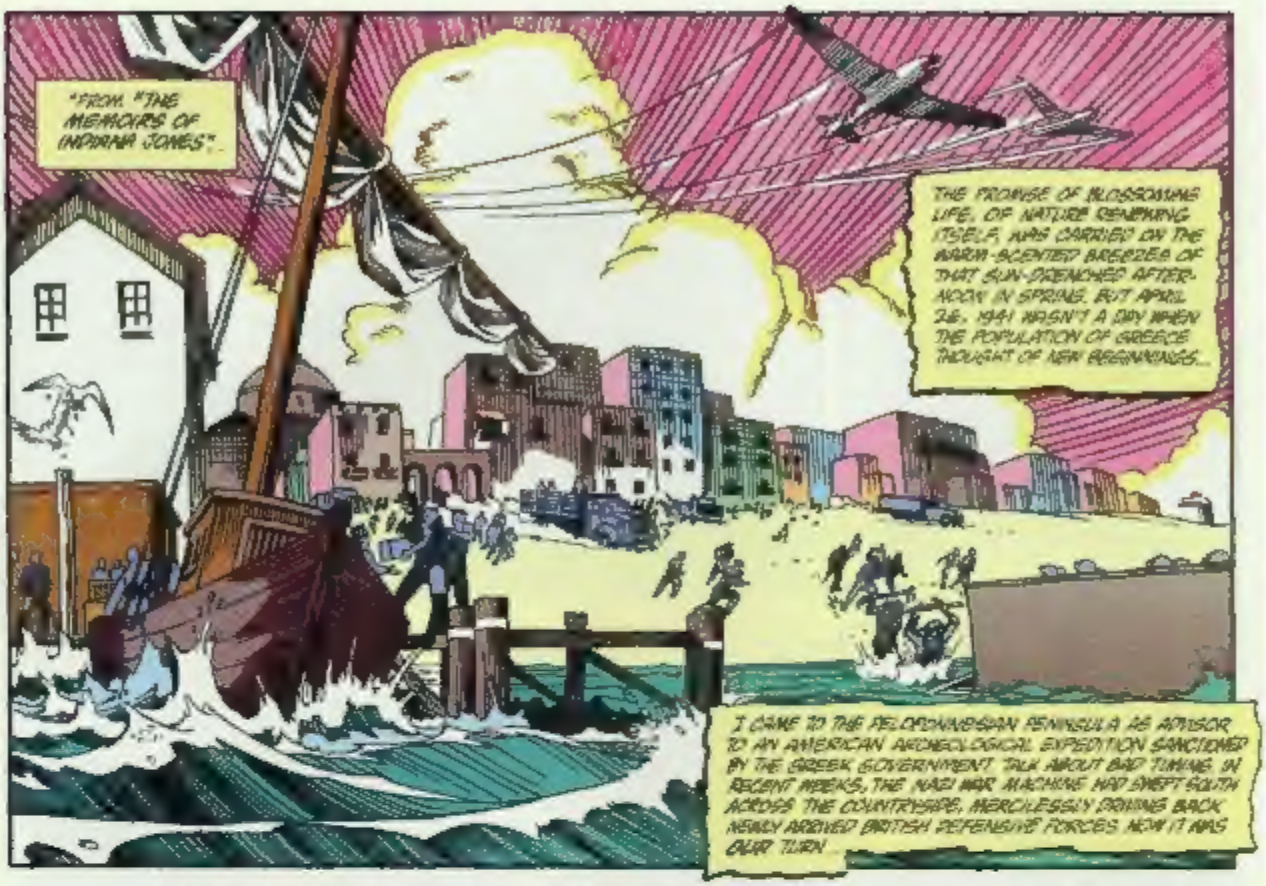
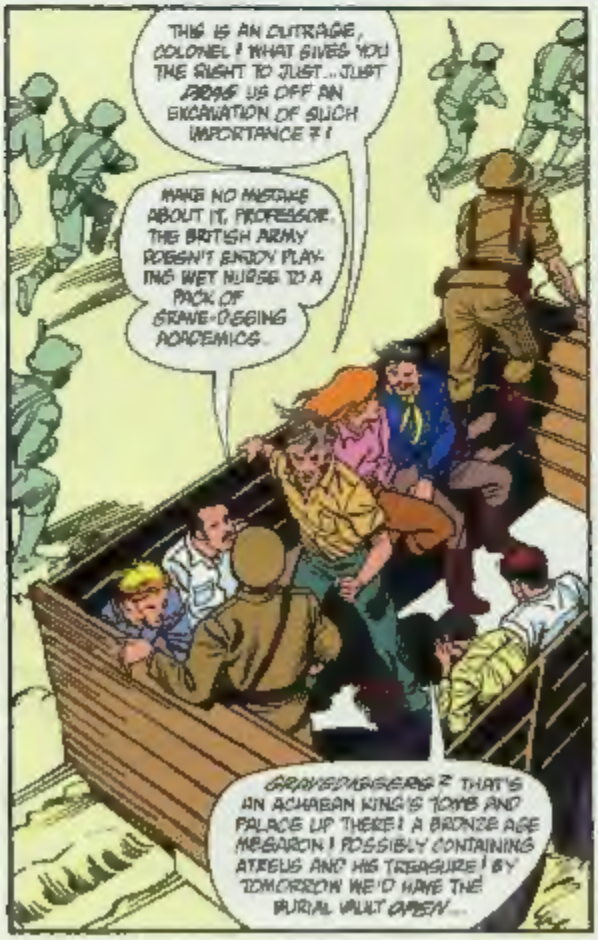
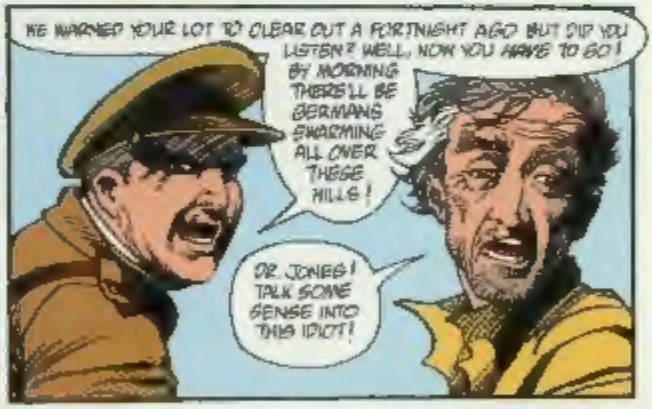

"FROM "THE MEMOIRS OF INDIANA JONES"...
THE PROMISE OF BLOSSOMING LIFE, OF NATURE RENEWING ITSELF, WAS CARRIED ON THE WARM-SCENTED BREEZES OF THAT SUN-DRENCHED AFTERNOON IN SPRING. BUT APRIL 26, 1941 WASN'T A DAY WHEN THE POPULATION OF GREECE THOUGHT OF NEW BEGINNINGS...
I CAME TO THE PELOPONNESIAN PENINSULA AS ADVISOR TO AN AMERICAN ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION SANCTIONED BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. TALK ABOUT BAD TIMING! IN RECENT WEEKS, THE NAZI WAR MACHINE HAD SWEPT SOUTH ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE, MERCILESSLY DRIVING BACK NEWLY ARRIVED BRITISH DEFENSIVE FORCES. NOW IT WAS OUR TURN...


THIS IS AN OUTRAGE, COLONEL! WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO JUST... JUST PUSH US OFF AN EXCAVATION OF SUCH IMPORTANCE?!
MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, PROFESSOR. THE BRITISH ARMY DOESN'T ENJOY PLAYING WET NURSE TO A PACK OF GRAVE-DIGGING ACADEMICS.
GRAVE-DIGGERS? THAT'S AN ACHAEAN KING'S TOMB AND PALACE UP THERE! A BRONZE AGE MEGARON! POSSIBLY CONTAINING ATREUS AND HIS TREASURE! BY TOMORROW WE'D HAVE THE BURIAL VAULT OPEN...


WE WARNED YOUR LOT TO CLEAR OUT A FORTNIGHT AGO! BUT DID YOU LISTEN? WELL, NOW YOU HAVE TO GO!
BY MORNING THERE'LL BE GERMANS SWARMING ALL OVER THESE HILLS!
DR. JONES! TALK SOME SENSE INTO THIS IDIOT!

I SUGGEST WE DO AS THE MAN SAYS.

BUT, BUT...THE SITE IS COMPLETELY EXPOSED! ALL OF OUR WORK WILL FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE DAMNED NAZIS...
LOOK AT OUR TEAM, MALCOLM. THEY'RE STUDENTS...JUST KIDS, FOR GOD'S SAKE! WE CAN'T SUBJECT THEM TO THIS KIND OF DANGER.
PERHAPS IF WE LEFT A SKELETON CREW BEHIND...
I HAVEN'T GOT THE TIME FOR THIS. I'VE GOT OVER 5,000 TROOPS TO EVACUATE.
TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS, COLONEL. I'LL GET THIS BUNCH ONTO THE LANDING CRAFT.
LET'S GO! HIT THE BEACH! HUSTLE!
NO! I WON'T DO IT!
I'M BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, DR. JONES! PUTTING PETTY POLITICS BEFORE YOUR PROFESSION!
SSSSSKKKRREEEE
MALCOLM! LOOK OUT! SHAKERS!
BA-BOOOM
THIS ISN'T POLITICS, MALCOLM! THIS IS WAR!
I'M BEGINNING TO SEE YOUR POINT...

COME ON! EVERYBODY INTO THE LANDING CRAFT!
ALL ACCOUNTED FOR? GOOD...
I'LL TRY TO RENDEZVOUS WITH YOU IN ALEXANDRIA!
JONES! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CLOSE YOUR MOUTH, MALCOLM. YOU'LL CATCH FLIES.
ASSUMING THE TREASURE OF ATREUS IS IN THAT TOMB, SOMEBODY'S GOT TO BEAT THE NAZIS THERE TONIGHT!...
IF I DON'T MAKE IT, FORWARD MY MAIL CARE OF THE FUEHRER!

WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE OTHERS, IT TOOK ME LONGER THAN I EXPECTED. THE MEDITERRANEAN SUN WAS HIGH OVER THE DIG BY THE TIME I HAD BROKEN THE SEAL AND ENTERED THE BURIAL VAULT.
DAMN!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.
GRAVE ROBBERS!
THE ODDS OF A PRISTINE FIND ARE ALWAYS SMALL.
STILL, I HAD RISKED MORE ON LESS BEFORE.
LET'S JUST SEE IF THEY TOOK IT ALL!
HUGGGG...

IT WASN'T HARD TO GUESS WHAT HAD HAPPENED. A STORY AS OLD AS GREED ITSELF.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR PAL DIDN'T WANT TO SPLIT THE LOOT!
ARCHEOLOGY HAD TAUGHT ME MANY LESSONS. IF THIS WAS THE TOMB OF ATREUS, KING HIGH MUCKY-MUCK OF THE MYCENAE...
BUT MAYBE HE OVER-LOOKED SOMETHING!
...AND FATHER TO AGAMEMNON OF ARGOS, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE GREEK SACK OF TROY...
THEN THERE HAD TO BE A SURPRISE OR TWO WAITING FOR ME. I WAS SURE OF IT!
CHILD'S PLAY FOR MRS. JONES' FAIR-HAIRED BOY!
"A FOOT ...FOR EACH FINGER"?!
I PACED OFF A FOOT FOR EACH FINGER.
EIGHT ...NINE ... TEN!
IF A BRAVE-ROBBING GRAPER HADN'T BEATEN ME TO IT...
...SOMETHING WORTHY OF A KING'S DOMINION...
...WAS WAITING FOR ME TO REVEAL IT TO THE WORLD!

I JUST NEEDED A LITTLE HELP...
...TO DOBY IT INTO THE LIGHT.
PLACK-KA
THE STUBBORN STONE WAS AS UNYIELDING AS THE CONQUERING MYCENAE THEMSELVES.
BUT I WAS DETERMINED TO UNCOVER THEIR FABULOUS SECRET!
THE WORKMANSHIP WAS PRE-MYCENAEAN!
FROM ANCIENT COLCHIS!
WHEN JASON HAD JASON AND HIS ARGONAUTS CLAIM THE GOLDEN FLEECE!

WHEN I FINALLY LEFT THE TOMB, APOLLO HAD ALREADY RIDDEN HIS CHARIOT IN TO THE SEA.
MY IMAGINATION AND MY WITS, TOO, IT SEEMED TO ME, HAD RACED EAST TO THE FAR SHORE OF THE BLACK SEA. THE SEAFARING HOME OF ALL THOSE THE CALCARUS!
WICKED! I SAW HIM FIRST!
HE
WHO ARE YOU GREEK OR BRITISH NAVY?!
EVIDENTLY, I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE ALSO SEEK THE NIGHT
SURROUND HIM! DON'T LET THE SPY ESCAPE!
AN ALLIANCE OF GERMAN ENGINEERS WAS GETTING
STAY BACK! NO ONE THIS MAN GETS I'M NOT GOING BACK!
(TRANSLATED FROM GERMAN)

NOW LOOK, I KNOW YOU GUYS ARE JUST ENG NEERS- NOT REAL SOLDIERS
YOU DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE - DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE - NOBODY NEEDS PANTS LEFT HERE
(YOUR USE OF THIS MAN AS A SHIELD IS FUTILE. EVEN A GERMAN SOLDIER IS WILLING TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE FATHER LAND!)
PAK
JEEZ
AND NOW, WHERE NEXT!?
NOOO

I'VE NEVER THOUGHT MANY I CHASE BEFORE THAT DAY
HHA UH
PA-TICK
PA TING
AND FOOLED MANY A SPEAR, ARROW, AND BULLET
BUT IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME
HEADING INTO TOWN!
SINCE I HAD RIDDEN A BIKE!
BANG
AHKOW
IT WAS TRUE THOUGH
I BICYCLE KILL
YOU REALLY DON'T FORGET HOW TO RIDE ME
BOOM BUDDA
WOW KOWA HUFA

VOOMPA
WHAAAAAA
WUNU

THERE AND OTHER ANNOYING OBSTACLES
CLUMP
KLUMP
KLUMPA
CLUMP
KLUM
ARE FAR FOR THE COURSE
AHHH!
OVER HERE! HURRY!
THIS HOUND SMELLS THE FOX GOING TO BOOKING! THE HUNT IS NEAR ENDED!

YOUNG MAN! ARE YOU ALONE HERE?
WE ARE LOOKING FOR A MAN. MAYBE YOU HAVE SEEN HIM WHEN AND YOU LAST SEE A MAN?
YOU'RE NEAR OUT!
I HAVE SEEN SUCH A MAN AT EAST CAGE WITHIN THE LAST EIGHT MONTHS, COMMANDER.
I DON'T STAND THERE, ACE GREASE! REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE SOLDIERS UNDER MY COMMAND!
ALL AN SPIES WILL BE EXECUTED! AS WILL ALL MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD WHOM HARBORS SUCH COMMANDER!

IN THE COURSE OF MY TRAVELS, I'VE SPENT TIME IN SALINAS, STEAM ROOMS, MINERAL SPRINGS
GET OUT QUICKLY! QUICKLY! THEY MIGHT BE COMING BACK
BUT NOTHING IN OLYMPUS HAS AN EVENLY NEW EXPERIENCE
HUUAHHH
YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?
AH, GLEN POPPA HE'S DEAD NOW. HE HAD LITTLE CARGO PLANE BUSINESS WITH LOTS OF COUNTRIES I PICK UP LANGUAGES I AM DIMPHALE KARGS AND YOU'E BRITISH?
AMERICAN MY JONES BARNETT COLLEGE BUT INDY WILL DO JUST FINE LOOK YOU REALLY HELPED ME DIMPHALE THANKS I'M GRATEFUL
NOW YOU GOT TO GET OUT OF GREECE RIGHT? GOOD! I'M WITH YOU
WHOA MOMMA! WAIT A MINUTE WHAT ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND?
UHHH! SHIT! GONE DESERTED ARMY HE'S A WEASEL! REAL SON OF A BITCH
YEAH YOU'VE GOT A COMMAND OF THE LANGUAGE ALL RIGHT
HEY YOU THINK I WANT TO RAISE MY BABY HERE? IN LAND THAT IS OCCUPIED WITH NAZIS?
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS-
COME MAYBE WE FIND A FISHING BOAT

FAT CHANCE EVERYTHING'S BEEN STRAFED OR BOMBED LOOKS LIKE THE SECRYANS HAVE DONE THEIR JOB. THOROUGH JOB
OKAY YOU STAY HERE KEEP OUT OF SIGHT I'LL GO DOWN THERE AND SEE IF MAYBE SOMETHING CAN BE SALVAGED
BE CAREFUL
IN RETROSPECT I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT I'D HAD THE FEELING I WAS BEING WATCHED MAYBE FOR HOURS AND AT THIS MOMENT MORE THAN EVER
WHAT?
CREEEEEEEK
BUT I DIDN'T!
HEY!

THESE GOONS IN THEIR BATHROBES WERE ALL OVER ME SNARLING IN FRENZY FOAMING AT THE MOUTH
OOOUUUFFF!
HI. THERE'S JUST BUT I CAUGHT SOME SNATCHES
(WHERE IS IT?! WHERE IS IT?!
BAM BAM
HOPE OF MY EMPIRE!
(OOK OF SKRUNTCH!
KLOP
UNNNGH!
FOR THE DARK ONE! AND THE GODDESS!
(FOR MEDUSA AND THE FLEECE!)
(TRANSLATED FROM GREEK)

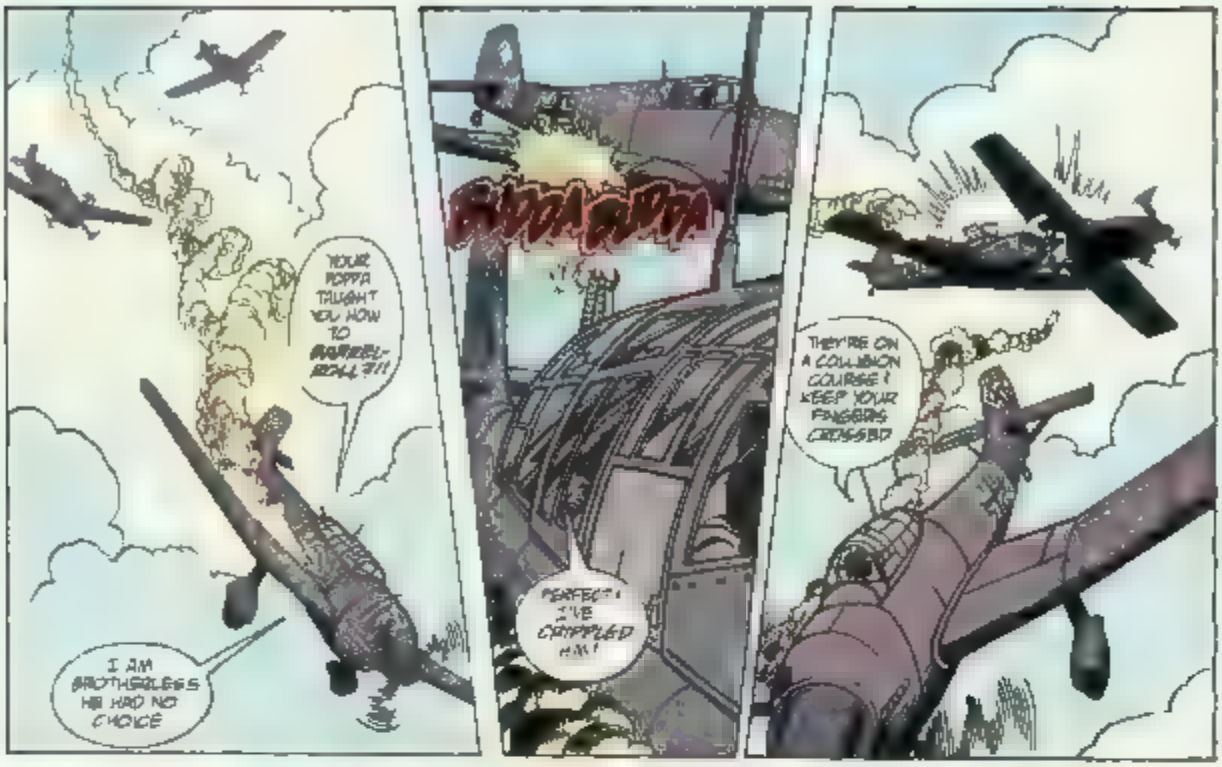
AAIIEE!
KA-PAAAK!
GET AWAY FROM HIM! LET HIM BE! NOW I WILL KILL YOU, I SWEAR!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WHO WERE THEY?
I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE
LOOK
A SEA PLANE UNDER CAMOUFLAGE NETTING
THEY'RE FLYING OVER AEGEAN, NORTHEAST? ISTANBUL?
I'M GOING AFTER THEM
I HAD A FRIEND IN ISTANBUL HE WAS A WORLD CLASS AUTHORITY ON THE GOLDEN FLEECE AND ALL THAT. DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND HIM?
"THE EAST" WHAT DOES IT MATTER.
HOW?
WHALE I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU. YOU'VE SAVED ME, AGAIN!
BUT WHAT I'VE GOT IN MIND IS JUST TOO RISKY TO DRAG A PREGNANT WOMAN ALONG

FSURBD THESE BOYS WOULD STILL BE AT THE DIG
BONK
INTRUDER! INTRUDER!
CLANG!
POW
UHHHHH

THAT'S THESE TIMES THIS IS SETTING TO BE HABIT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? SOON T I CAN
THIS S IDL DANGEROUS ! GET DOWN FROM THERE
AND F YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME YOU BETTER HOW DO YOU SAY? SHAKE A FOOT !
OH LAWDY
MOVE OVER
IT'S OKAY I ALREADY GOT THE ATTACK
YOU CAN FLY ?
I TOLD YOU POPPA HAD CARGO PLANE I SIT ON HIS LAP
RRROOROMMOOMMMM
BUDDA BUDDA
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK
KRRROOMMM

IT'S SHORT FOR INDIANA
INDIANA ? WHY WOULD PARENTS NAME CHILD INDIANA ? WHAT HERE THEY THINKING ? ISN'T THAT AMERICAN PROVINCE ?
WE'RE IN LUCK NO SIGN OF PURSUIT SO FAR SO GOOD
YOU KNOW I AM WONDERING INDY WHAT KIND OF NAME IS THAT INDY
STATE WE CALL THEM STATES INDIANA IS A NICKNAME
WHY KNOW THE HERE IS SOME PLACE
BINGO ! THEY CAN'T MATCH OUR SPEED WE'LL CATCH UP IN A COUPLE OF
BRAKABOOM
BRAKABOOM TATATT
MESSERSCHMITTS !! WHERE DID THEY COME FROM ?
BRAKA BRAKA
BRAKA BRAKA
BRAKA BRAKA

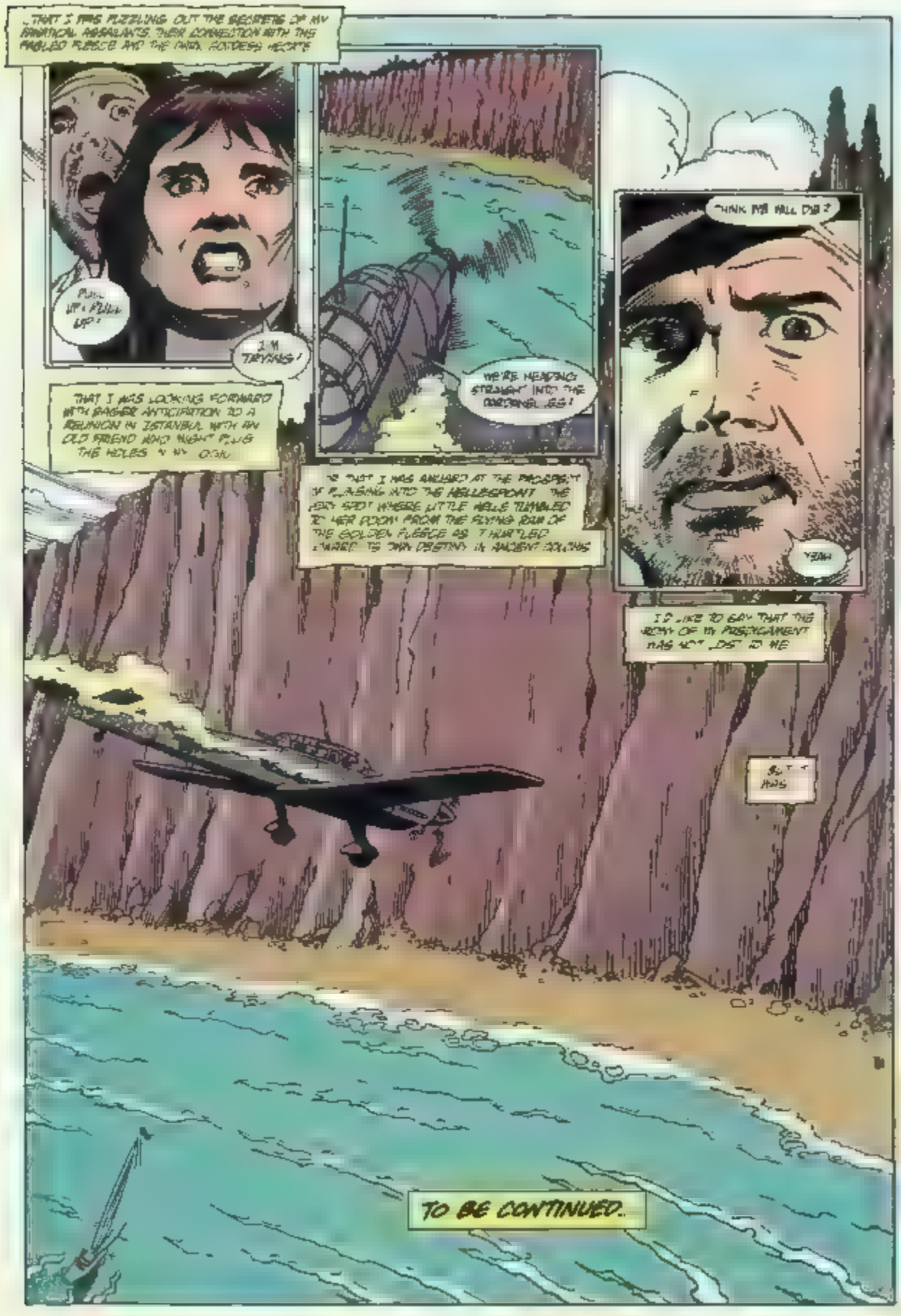
IT'S THEIR ADVANTAGE! SEE IF YOU CAN GET ON TOP! GET ABOVE THEM!
NO! NO! NO! ARE YOU NUTS?! I SAID GET ABOVE!
OH WAIT THIS IS BETTER
BA BIDDA BIDDA
KA WHOOOOOM
RATA-TATT
BRATA-BRATT
KA-CHINK KA-CHUNK
"HOT NO-REAL TIPS, CHIPHALE! NOW DO SOMETHING ELSE!


YOUR POPPA TAUGHT YOU HOW TO BARREL-ROLL?!!
I AM BROTHERLESS HE HAD NO CHOICE
BUDDA BUDDA
PERFECT! I'VE CRIPPLED HIM!
THEY'RE ON A COLLISION COURSE! KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED!

KA-DA-WHOOM!

BULL'S EYE
WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE TREES YET WE'RE LOSING ALTITUDE
AS I'VE SAID BEFORE ENGLISH IS GOLDEN

FAST
AS THAT SMOKING CRATE OF SHEET METAL AND BOLTS PLUMMETED FROM THE SKY. I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT IN MY MIND I WAS ILLUMINATING ON ALL THE TANTALIZING ASPECTS OF THIS MYSTERY IN WHICH I WAS EMBROILED


...THAT I WAS PUZZLING OUT THE SECRETS OF MY IRRATIONAL ASSAILANTS, THEIR CONNECTION WITH THE FABLED FLEECE AND THE FATAL GODDESS HECATE.
PULL UP! PULL UP!
I'M TRYING!
THAT I WAS LOOKING FORWARD WITH EAGER ANTICIPATION TO A REUNION IN ISTANBUL WITH AN OLD FRIEND WHO MIGHT PLUG THE HOLES IN MY LOG.
WE'RE HEADING STRAIGHT INTO THE DARDANELLES!
THINK WE WILL DIE?
YEAH.
SO THAT I WAS ANGERED AT THE PROSPECT OF PLUNGING INTO THE HELLESPONT THE SEA WHERE LITTLE HELLE TUMBLED TO HER DOOM FROM THE FLYING RAM OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE AS IT HURTLED THROUGH TO ITS DESTINY IN ANCIENT COLCHIS.
I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT THE GRAVITY OF MY PREDICAMENT HAS NOT LOST ON ME
BUT I WAS
TO BE CONTINUED..

to abruptly shift gears? Could it have been, for our purposes, the mystical influence of the Golden Fleece?

So we had a locale in which to begin our story — the Peloponnesian Peninsula of Greece somewhere near the site of old Mycenae. Indy would be excavating a fictional tomb belonging to Arteus, father of Agamemnon. But at what period of Indy's life, what precise point of time in the 20th century? There seemed to be no more dramatic and threatening moment for a Peloponnesian archeological dig than during the rout by the German juggernaut of the British from the Greek peninsula: the last fighting force left to face the Axis on the European continent.

Greece had been brought into the Second World War by Italy's attack of October 28, 1940. By mid-November, the Greek Army had stopped the Italian offensive and actually managed to gain ground into Albania, western neighbor of Greece, a buffer bordering the Adriatic Sea beyond which dwelt the Italian coast. On December 13, 1940, Hitler, needing to secure his Balkan flank for the attack on Russia planned for the summer of 1941, directed the beginning of Operation Maritsa — the German invasion of Greece.

In March 1941, German troops massed in Bulgaria on the eastern Yugoslavian border, just north of Greece. By March 25, Yugoslavia was forced to align itself with the Axis. Two days later, the Yugoslavian populace revolted against this capitulation and overthrew its Belgrade government. On Easter Sunday, April 6, 1941, Hitler responded by invading Yugoslavia and on into Greece.

The British, expecting a German attack, had prepared by making a heroic scramble to pull into Greece from the North African front what shallow resources it could muster. The defensive focus of the 53,000 troops of the British Expeditionary Force was outflanked in three days. The continuing Anglo-Greek attempt to slow the German invasion first reformed along a Mount Olympus line. When this resistance fell, there was no longer any doubt that Greece was lost to occupation.

The best the British could do was to salvage part of its forces in a mass evacuation, an evacuation under conditions worse than Dunkirk the year before. Little air cover was available for safe retreat. It was far to any friendly shore. Little shipping was available for transport. A delaying action to permit embarkation of the main forces was fought along roughly a 30-mile stretch centered on the historic Pass of Thermopylae.

The British evacuation from Peloponnesian ports withdrew to Crete and Alexandria. It is during this tide of 41,000 troops streaming to sea (April 24 - May 1, 1941) that we chose to open our story. It was by swimming against this tide that Indy becomes launched toward war-time Istanbul, toward ancient Colchis beyond, and embroiled in arcane mysteries of primal force....

Stick around for next month's conclusion to *Indiana Jones and the Golden Fleece.*

— Pat & Dave

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INDIANA JONES AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE

David Pawson, Pat McGreal, and Ken Hooper

This stellar creative team will be signing books at the following comic shops in California's Bay Area

July 23, 1994
12:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

Comic Depot
41200 L. Blacow Road
Fremont California
(510) 657-5376

July 23, 1994
4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.

Crush Comics and Cards
2869 Castro Valley Blvd.
Castro Valley, California
(510) 581-4779

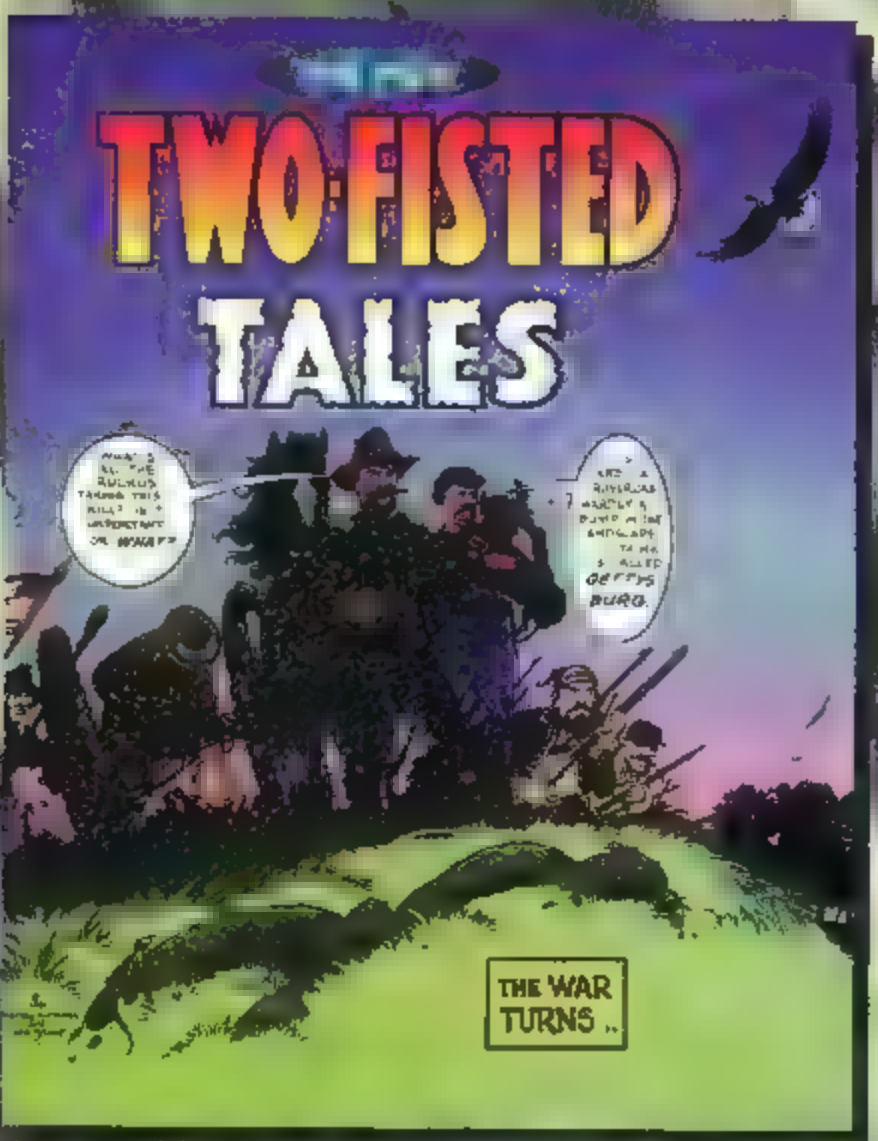
July 24, 1994
12:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

Flying Colors Comics
and Other Cool Stuff
2980 Treat Blvd
Concord, California
(510) 825-5410

July 24, 1994
1:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Stand-Up Comics
10020 San Pablo Ave
El Cerrito, California
(510) 525-3223

YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU'RE IN A WAR, EVEN IF YOU MAKE IT HOME.



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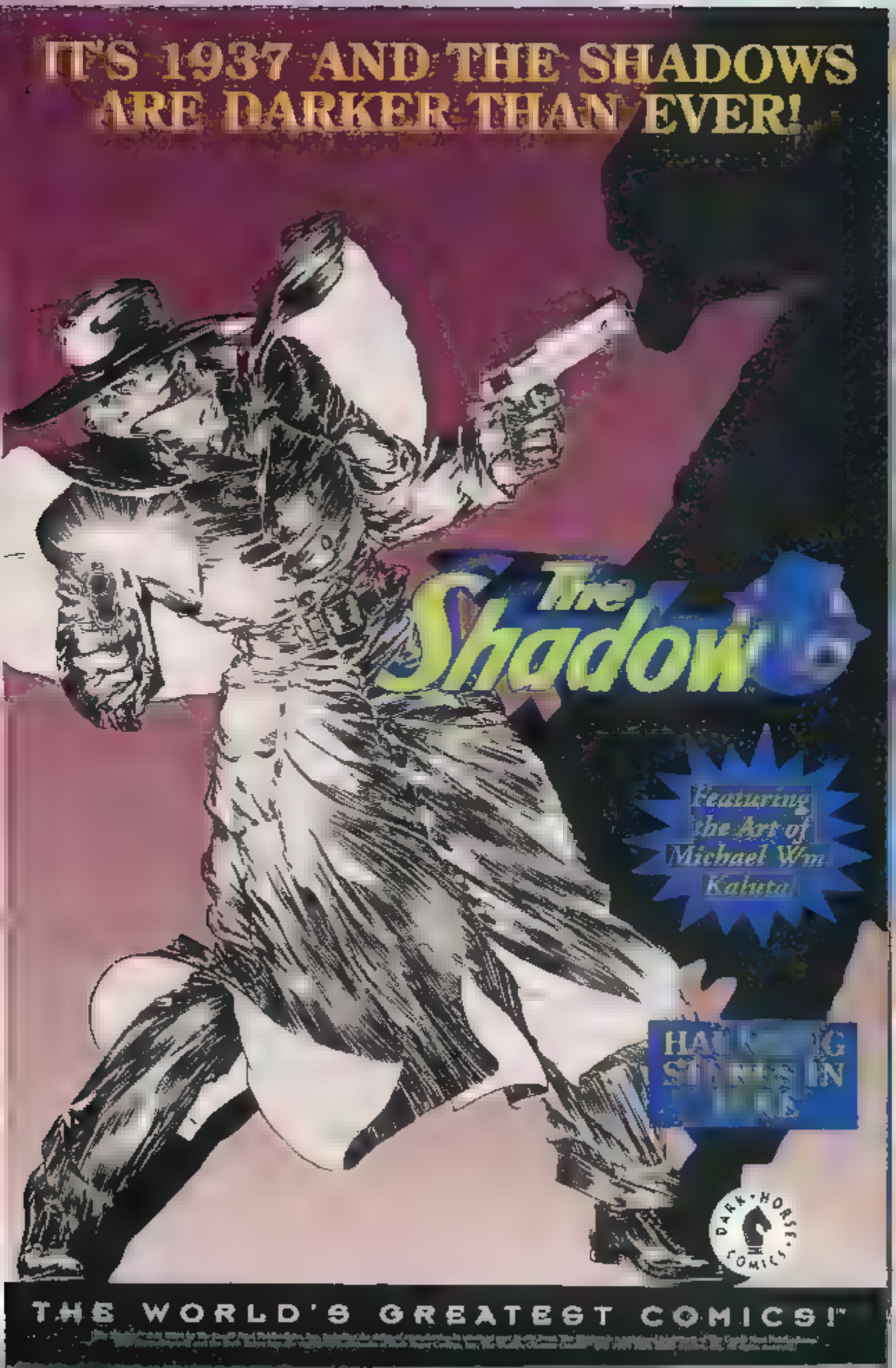
IT'S 1937 AND THE SHADOWS ARE DARKER THAN EVER!
The Shadow
Featuring the Art of Michael Wm. Kaluta
DARK HORSE COMICS
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS!™

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A MADMAN IS SETTING FIRE TO LOS ANGELES
and he's elected Larry Munro his personal chauffeur! Can a 1,200-pound Concrete put out enough speed to beat the bullet aimed at his best friend's head? If you haven't seen Concrete before, you've got to start with "Killer Smile"!
Paul Chadwick's award-winning series returns as part of the Legend lineup!
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KILLER SMILE
A four-hour adventure told in four furious issues, from your friends at Dark Horse and Legend! Look for it in July!
LEGEND
DARK HORSE COMICS

FINISH LINE

There's nothing quite like the glazed, half-patronizing, half-confused expression people give you when you tell them that you edit comic books. You meet someone, strike up a conversation, and invariably the question comes up: "What do you do?" If you answer, "I edit comic books," you'll get that look. Every time.

If you say you write comics, or draw comics, people think they have an idea of what you're talking about: comics artists draw their pictures in those little boxes, and the writers then come along and put words in the bubbles above the characters' heads, right? But editing?

JUNE CHECKLIST

SHIPPING JUNE 7
- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS #20
- ❑ CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON GOLD-CAST BIT
- ❑ DARK HORSE DOWNUNDER #1
- ❑ IAN FLEMING'S JAMES BOND 007: SHATTERED HELIX #1
- ❑ JOE R. LANSDALE'S BY BIZARRE HANDS #3
- ❑ RACK & RAIN #4
- ❑ TITAN SPECIAL #1

SHIPPING JUNE 14
- ❑ ALIENS: STRONGHOLD #3
- ❑ ATLAS #3
- ❑ DARK HORSE PRESENTS #86
- ❑ DARK HORSE INSIDER #21
- ❑ INDIANA JONES AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE #3
- ❑ JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN #28: POWER #4
- ❑ MADMAN COMICS #2
- ❑ OUT OF THE VORTEX #5
- ❑ WILL TO POWER #3

SHIPPING JUNE 21
- ❑ BARB WIRE #3
- ❑ CARAVAN KIDD PART 3 #2
- ❑ ENEMY #3
- ❑ GRENDEL TALES: THE DEVIL IN OUR MIDST #3
- ❑ HELLBOY: SEED OF DESTRUCTION #4
- ❑ STAR WARS: DROIDS #3
- ❑ WILL TO POWER #3
- ❑ X #5

SHIPPING JUNE 28
- ❑ CATALYST: AGENTS OF CHANGE #5
- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE #1
- ❑ CLASSIC STAR WARS VOLUME ONE (TRADE PAPERBACK COLLECTION)
- ❑ DARK HORSE COMICS #22
- ❑ HELLHOUNDS: PANZER COPS #5
- ❑ JOHNNY DEMON #2
- ❑ MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR #2
- ❑ PREDATOR: BAD BLOOD #4
- ❑ THE SHADOW #3
- ❑ WHITE LIKE SHE #3
- ❑ WILL TO POWER #3

"You mean you check to make sure the words are spelled correctly?"

Well, yeah. That, and about a million other things — no one of which sounds particularly difficult, but taken together can add up to the equivalent of sorting garter snakes from rattlesnakes ... in the dark. It's nerve-wracking, time-consuming, potentially disastrous, and you can never tell how well you've done your job until it's too late. You think I'm exaggerating? Okay, I am — a little. Am I complaining? Not a bit.

Sure, it's possible to screw up and be an accomplice to creating a mess. An editor can pair a writer with an artist who refuses to draw what the writer has called for. Or an editor can team a penciller with an entirely inappropriate inker. At worst, an editor can sleepwalk through a project and end up with a story that the readers find boring. But, when everything comes together, the editor can feel proud to have had a hand in helping to create something that everyone is happy with.

Unfortunately, many things can go wrong that are beyond the editor's ability to control. Things like changes in publishing schedules, packages lost by shipping companies (though this — once a favorite freelancer excuse for lateness — is becoming a rarity in these days of minute-to-minute computerized tracking), and, general freelancer tardiness. For instance, if the penciller on a project is late, it may force the inker to bow out in order to meet his or her commitments to another project — which means the editor is on the phone, scrambling to find a new inker. And, possibly, a new letterer and a new colorist.

So, wh, t sort of things *do* fall within an editor's control? Well, say a writer forgets a pertinent story point and leaves a gaping hole in a plot; the editor sees that the hole is repaired — even if it means rewriting script pages his- or herself. If a letterer mistakenly assigns one character's dialogue to another, the editor puts the balloons back in their correct order. If a colorist inadvertently mis-codes a character's Y5R3B3 hair (brown) as Y5R1B3 (almost green), you-know-who has to change the character's hair back to the right color.

Plus, there are lots of tasks that do not have anything to do with actually editing the material that are still the editor's responsibility: maintaining budgets, tracking vouchers and contracts, writing solicitation copy, working with marketing to come up with ad copy, writing letter columns, chaperoning visiting freelancers, and writing columns like this one.

The editor is the go-between for the company and the creator. With a foot in both camps, the editor must always keep the company's best interests in mind, while at the same time keep the freelancers happy and committed.

The editor is the bridge between the writer and the penciller, the penciller and the inker, etc., on down the line.

Depending on the situation, the editor is sometimes the freelancer's best friend, sometimes his or her worst enemy. Part cheerleader, part offensive guard; part father confessor, part nagging parent; part commiserator, part demanding boss. A stick in one hand, a carrot in the other, an editor becomes adept at using both, and, hopefully, at knowing which one to use when.

But, as far as editing actual material is concerned, the most important role the editor plays is that of you, the reader. The editor must put himself in the position of a first-time reader — someone who knows nothing about the characters or the situations in the comic. Does the story make sense? Is it clear who the characters are and what part they play in the story when they first appear in panel? Does the dialogue ring true? Is what's happening in the story entertaining? Is the reader made to feel involved with the characters and their plight? Do the events on each page make the reader want to go on to the next?

One thing is for sure in all of this: every editor has his or her own way of sorting the garter snakes from the rattlers. Next month we'll hear from an assortment of your favorite editors here at Dark Horse on how they avoid getting bitten.

—Randy Stradley

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